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THE MERCY OF GOD IN OUR CHAS- TISEMENTS.

A RETURN OF JUDGMENT UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS THE
ONLY CONDITION OF OUR SALVATION.

Part of a Discourse delivered on Thanksgiving Day, in the Church of the Presidents, by Rev. Dr. Channing, on Psalm 24: 12-13. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastisest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law, that may give him rest from the days of adversity, who will not exalt his head; but will not exalt his head, and will forsake his inheritance; but he that is lowly will return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall stand it."

Here is the condition of salvation, and the proof that God does not cast us off. He will have a return of judgment unto righteousness, and all that takes place, he will chastise us, he will exalt our own judgments upon us, if he means to bring us to repentance, until we do indeed repent, and bearing forth fruits meet for repentance, before God, and delivering the oppressed, as called from the outset, to this work, and if we shall have performed it, he would bring us into his presence and crush this rebellion for us. But we refused to deliver the oppressed, unless it should become an absolute necessity, indispensable to the existence of our own government; and for this impious God is still rendering and punishing us; and the fact that he is still dealing with us is full of hope; for we may believe that he means to bring us to repentance, and will not suffer us to go in our sins. We might review the course of his discipline with us ever since the rebellion, and the war broke out, and we should find that thus far, he has been simply chastening our wickedness, to bring us, by repeated and humiliations, to a point where we should at length acknowledge our guilt, and cast ourselves on God, with a return of judgment unto righteousness. We cannot yet despair of such a conclusion, and for this we are bound to labor and to pray.

But the present hour will not permit such a development in detail, and we shall only refer to the righteous principle on which we had based ourselves, as we sat in just before the rebellion broke out, that we could not and would not interfere with slavery where it was, but were doing the utmost of our duty, and all that we had any right to do, in preventing its extension. Thus we set ourselves against the return of judgment unto righteousness; and it was at that climax of our guilt, that God interferred in the judgment of this rebellion and war for the deliverance of the slaves and our salvation. But for the rebellion and war, we ourselves should not have stopped at non-interference, but should have amended our own Constitution in behalf of slavery. From this awful degradation and crime God saved us by the rebellion.

But up to the last moment we have been steadily denying the right and disdaining the purpose of delivering the enslaved, or redressing their wrongs, or doing them justice, as any object of the war; and even ministers of the gospel have had the hardened and impudent to declare that we had no right to make justice the object of the war; thus directly contradicting the revealed will of God, who has committed the power of the sword to human governments, only for the sake of justice, any other object in war except justice being forbidden of the Almighty.

But we have gone so far as to say that if by redressing the wrongs of the enslaved we could save our own Union, it would be right for us to redress those wrongs, but if not, and even in proposing to redress those wrongs, we have declared the impious purpose of keeping in slavery the slaves of loyal men, and of returning to slavery the slaves of as many rebels as would return to their loyalty.

But so soon as the tables are turned, and that slavery becomes an injury to us, then it becomes Constitutional to put it down, and to redress that wrong. The moment property in man becomes dangerous to ourselves, it must be forbidden, or rather, not so much forbidden, as taken away from our enemies, and committed, as a privilege, only to our friends, to those who are loyal to our own government. It would still be unconstitutional and wrong to redress the wrongs of the millions held as slaves by loyal masters.

IMMORALITY OF SUCH REASONING.

Now you perceive, as the lowest degree of critical judgment on the morality of such reasoning, that the authors of it, and those who stay themselves upon it in the tolerance of slavery, have evidently no conception of any obligation on our part, as a government and people, toward the enslaved, but such as arises from a primary and supreme obligation to ourselves. The long practice of oppression has become a necessity, and so has passed into a right, as the habit of drinking brandy, after it has produced *delirium tremens*, is continued by order of the physician, as a necessity and right growing out of the condition produced by intemperance, or the man dies. As long as he lives, he must live upon brandy, or delirium tremens will kill him.

Of the same nature, though not with so good a foundation, is the argument for the continuance of slavery, on the ground of the danger of renouncing it, or of redressing the wrong. To redress the wrong of another might bring upon ourselves the wrath of the whole company of thieves and murderers. We are commanded to restore an estate which we have taken from an orphaned family; we answer that we have no right to do that, because of the necessity created for ourselves, of keeping it, we having so long lived upon it, that our own family would be beggar'd if we gave it up. This was the exact argument for letting slavery alone, used by President Lincoln before his election, when he said that "wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that is much to do to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation."

The argument is immoral. You refuse to unclench your grasp from your victim, because of unpleasant consequences to yourselves; you refuse to restore that which you have taken, on the plea that it will damage your own possessions. Having committed one crime, you regard another as necessary to avoid the consequences of the first, and therefore as no longer a crime, but a duty of self-preservation. The highway robber, having stripped his helpless victim, murders and buries him to prevent detection and punishment, and urges as a reason the necessity of protecting his own family. A midnight burglar adds murder to his burglary, when confronted and commanded to relinquish his spoils, because the restoration would be attended with the inconvenience of retribution. In what respect is your plea for al-

most any better than this? On your reasoning, the criminal is justified in protecting himself, (at whatever cost to the victim of his wrong) from the consequences of his crime to himself; that is the first thing to be considered, and unless that can be secured, it would not be right in him to attempt to redress their wrong. It would be a violation of the compact in his own constitution which binds him to take care that he himself and his own family receive no detriment.

It would be hazardous, you say, to your proposed Union, and injurious to your loyal friends and to the Border States, to give freedom to the enslaved; it might make the Border States your enemies, and induce them to join the South; therefore you are precluded from redressing these wrongs done to the families held in bondage; nay, you are bound still to hold them in bondage; you are justified before God in maintaining that injustice, because it would be to your own injury, if you did justice.

This is your State theology, not unsupported by the scheme of those divines who ridiculed the idea of slavery being sinful per se. But if your position in and before God begins with self-interest, for the sake of our manipulations upon humanity will it land you, when Satan takes you in hand? And if self-interest requires you to do wrong, in order to protect your Union and Government, how much more will it require the Judge of all the earth to do right, in your punishment, in order to protect the Universe, and the Divine Government, and every righteous government in the world, from the consequences of your justification of wrong-doing?

IMPIETY OF OUR RENEWAL OF THE WRONG.

Now, though all the moralists on earth, and all governments, should join in our justification against God for not emancipating the millions of the enslaved, who has been appointed to set free, that would not rescue us from the obligation, nor turn falsehood into truth. It is impossible to deny that the one imperative obligation upon this nation is to do justice to the millions of the enslaved. It is so done now. Because it is not done, all this misery has come upon us, seeing that we have made no such excuse for not redressing, forthwith, the wrong done *against ourselves* in the rebellion.

We can as easily protect and keep in order the enslaved, as we can make war upon the slaveholders. The inconvenience to ourselves of putting down this rebellion and requiring justice on our own account, has not yet been alleged as a good reason why we should not attempt to redress that wrong and put down that rebellion.

Yet our government, even in that attempt, have wrought into its very heart a renewal of the wrong against others, against the oppressed. The government, even in the confederation and emancipation bill, has consigned to continued slavery the children, wives, and mothers of the slaves of loyal persons, thus establishing slavery, in the very attitude of pretending to destroy it, and establishing it in its most offensive and hideous form and relations, sanctioning the chain of property in man, as extending to the wife, mother, and child of the slave victim, and to his innocent unborn infant!

Did the national legislature know what they were doing in passing this most barbarous, most execrable clause? If they did not, then it is a most solemn and affecting proof to what a degree slavery and the long habit of submission to its sway, have eaten out the heart of our humanity, and destroyed all sense of justice. And how happened it that such an atrocious statute could have been passed, and not a single individual found to protest against it, and to throw the country upon God, justice, and humanity, in forbidding such an enormity? As if on purpose to defy the Almighty in the midst of his very judgments against slavery, and ours against the rebellion, we set the most infamous element of slavery itself, the sacrifice of women and children in the text of our very covenant of freedom! We have so contrived the very lash with which we scourge the rebels, that its most cruel sting, the wire string, the rasping, flogging strand, that tears the flesh, the iron that enters into the soul, shall touch the poor negroes only; it was inserted for them, and immolates them through lighting, in this thunderstorm.

PROGRESS AND CULMINATION OF THE WICKEDNESS.

In this manner has this impious gone on, till its sweeping pall had shrouded both government and nation, whose progress in such principles was the funeral of freedom. The soul had entered into our bones, had palsied the element of justice, had perverted our minds in regard to it, leaving us lost to all sense of what is due to the race we had so long and so dreadfully tortured. Amidst all this, God seemed to have hidden himself, and we went on as prosperously as Sodom, up to the evening before her ruin, as joyously as Babylon, when she said, I sit a Queen, and shall see no disaster.

These things hast thou done, and I kept silence. Thou thoughtst that I was altogether such an one as thyself! Heaven and earth are silent for a generation; one might fancy (a great writer has noted, commenting on a great tragedy) that they are treacherously silent, in order that our nation might have time and leisure uninterrupted, for building up to the clouds the pyramid of our complicated offences.

And certainly the last and worst exasperation is the pretence that we were not at liberty to execute justice, but only free to preserve the wrong where it was, and keep it from extending. On the summit of that pyramid the genius of our freedom invokes God to witness, that having made a compact with Satan, which cannot be broken, we were not free to serve God, until Satan himself released us, by violating his part of the agreement.

Now the wonder is, that God has not arisen in judgment long before. But the depths to which we would go, in this iniquity, were not yet sounded, and the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. It had been required of us, to the end of the days of our fathers, we would not have committed this great wickedness. But now it is bound upon us from their day, and by their compact, and we cannot throw it off. We are not at liberty to do justice to a race devoted to slavery, and in regard to whom all the precedents of our history, the guarantees of our Constitution, and the intricacies of State law, require injustice.

It was necessary also that the church, and its various corporations and managers, should not only be proved to have acquiesced in all this iniquity, and consequently in the horror of thick darkness settling over the land, but that its priesthood and leaders should be found defending the wickedness, and the necessity of tolerating it, and the impossibility of putting it away, and the alleged right of property growing out of it, to such a degree, that even, after the rebellion

WILL GOD BE SATISFIED?

We may think we are under no further obligation than to redress the wrongs of the enslaved, and interfere for their protection; but will God be satisfied? Can he make Christians out of us

in behalf of slavery had commenced, they should be seen denouncing the attempt to make the war a war against slavery, and defending the undiminished right of these rebels and traders in human flesh, to the continued possession of their slaves as property; so that emancipation could not be permitted, even as a war measure, the people at the South having the same title to their property, that the people of the North have to theirs.

It was necessary for religious men to teach the righteousness of property in man, in consequence of immemorial possession, and the unrighteousness of attempting, by abstract conclusions from the Word of God, to destroy that right of property, or to authorize the taking away of the property itself. And we have seen all these exasperations. The stealing of men and women, and the stealing of their children, in one generation, and the transmission of such stealing, as a domestic practice to the second generation, is held to constitute a right of property in the race stolen, which is an heirloom in the family, and cannot be alienated nor the title taken away, but is so sacred that justice cannot reach it, and nothing but a state of war can justify the breaking of it up. And even in a state of war every expedient must be tried to save that right of man-stealing and not till every other measure has been tried in vain, can the release of the race stolen be restored to it.

PROPERTY OF THE PLEDGE OF NON-INTERFERENCE.

Considering the declared ends of government, this doctrine of non-interference for the deliverance of the enslaved is the highest audacity of impious against God. For what end was government appointed, and commissioned of God with the slaves of which he was then possessed from the shores of the Atlantic to the borders of the Mississippi? When the chairman called on Mr. Seward, to urge the matter, he was bluntly told him, "He had better disband his delegation and go home." On his asking "why?" the Foreign relation, "Because what you propose to do is to bring in face of the public the Southern rebellion!" * What said the chairman? "What you mean to say, that when we hold all the trump cards we are not to use them on the enemy?" * What you may put it in what shape you please," said Mr. Seward, pausing petulantly up and down the floor, "but the Government do not propose to interfere with the government in connection with this rebellion."

In a conversation with Lord Lyons, scarcely three weeks ago, Mr. Seward, while discussing with his lordship the condition of American affairs, remarked in substance—"I have now got the country just where I desire it. The North is nearly so bad, so while the South is utterly sick and prostrated, we are in a position to make war upon the slaves, on both sides, as soon as possible, to bring the country to a standstill, and to end the war by Spring." To this complacent theory, his lordship quietly remarked—"Yes, Mr. Seward, you may think you have the country where you want it, but are you sure the country will remain to require so long a time that position for you to sustain the Southern party?" * What said the chairman? "I have now the nation where I want it. There are no more troops to be had in either side, and the war must be fought out with those already in the field. There is a growing aversion and contempt of the contest; so with the combined naval forces of the South, the dissolution of the Southern party, and the dissolution of the Northern party, and the whole thing will be split forever."

We mean by this language to declare our fixed belief that we are even now in the hands of our republic is inevitable, unless William H. Seward is quickly taken from the helm of the Government. And this, on our part, is no vague and idle fear; nor is it entertained solely by ourselves. Thousands of thinking men, who have watched with wonder Mr. Seward's course since the exchanged trial, and his conduct with the traitors of the South, and his conduct with the traitors of the North, will be glad to learn that unless some fresh hand take possession of the wheel, and put it hand down against our previous course, the Union will be soon upon the rocks.

It is Mr. Seward who is the author of the two and warring, which has been the chief of the south, and Mr. Seward who, with a blindness which denies all presumption of his statesmanship, refused to recognize the possibility of a rebellion.

It was he who, in this false calculation steered the shameful surrenders of Buchanan; he who

calculated to apprise the South of the revolution of the 1st of January, and to bring it on, too

before the hands of the President, while Letchworth & Co. foisted us of Norfolk and Harper's Ferry, and thus bore off Virginia to the arms of the Confederates.

Even then this famous statesman did not seem to realize that war was in the wind, and by way of making sure of his course, conceived the plan of sending a force to the Gulf of Mexico, and thus to give the South a new field of operations.

He was then, even since this conversation with Lord Lyons, "I have now the nation where I want it. There are no more troops to be had in either side, and the war must be fought out with those already in the field. There is a growing aversion and contempt of the contest; so with the combined naval forces of the South, the dissolution of the Southern party, and the dissolution of the Northern party, and the whole thing will be split forever."

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son, and to effect from human polity the relation which the individual bears to the State, in the United States. The free blacks of the United States. Constitution; therefore, it is, for a most excellent constitution, "a better one" as Frederick Douglass has well said, "than would be framed by a Convention held to-day in the United States." But whatever evil the framers of to-day might do, they could not deprive free blacks of citizenship. Such deprivation is not in the nature of things.

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NEW-YORK, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1862.

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arisen, according to his promise, to set at liberty the oppressed. Their oppressors are the very rebels we are contending against. And yet, with unparalleled contumacy, foolishness, and impetuosity, we are persisting that we are not fighting for the liberation of the slaves!—in other words, we are not fighting on the side of God, and of his crushed poor, in the very war which—as is generally admitted—is destined, in some way, to work out their deliverance! What right or reason, then, have we to expect that God will show himself to be on our side? Have we any grounds for such an expectation? Have we not the strongest reasons to apprehend the contrary?

God governs the world in righteousness. In this war, he is, thus far, most righteously, and most severely, punishing both sides. "For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still?" Who, but an atheist, can wonder at our recent and terrible calamity? Who that believes in the God of the Bible can help seeing his hand in it; and hearing his awful voice, in the booming of the canon that has swept down thousands of our sons, brothers, and friends, and acquaintances.—"Let my people go! Break every yoke!"—Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof! "If ye will be willing, and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it!"

When shall the people, the priests, and the rulers, of this land hearken to the voice of God, from the battle-field, and humble themselves before him? When shall it be?

THEIR STRENGTH IS TO SIT STILL.

Isaiah, Chap. XXX.

There is a class of persons who seem to regard themselves, and to be regarded by others, as standing at the very summit of human society, and exerting a wide influence in all public affairs, whether ecclesiastical or civil, who, nevertheless at the same time, are equally remarkable for pluming themselves, and being honored by their admirers for the policy of doing nothing, or as little as possible, to change the condition of society: to say nothing, or as little as possible, that could bring upon them the odium or the inconvenience of being, or of seeming to be, opposed to those who, for the time being, give character to the usages of society, or direction to the course of public affairs. Not for the sake of saving a nation, would they run the risk of offending those in power, of losing the patronage of the great, or the applause of the multitude. They have reputations to be nursed, which might be injured by their attempting to do anything that could deserve a good reputation, anything upon which the real benefactors of their race have won renown. They cannot afford to make earnest use, or trial of their influence in opposition to any great social wrongs, lest by displeasing wrong doers they should lose their influence over them, and over those who follow in their train. Their conception of exerting an influence in society is that of swimming on the surface of its current, keeping every one, or at least the great, and the middle, in good humor with them, so that, at all times, they may be acceptable to them in all that they may say or do. For, how could they expect to have influence upon society, unless they are popular in society? Or how could they have influence with men in power, unless they were on the side of the men in power? And how could they be on their side, while opposing their measures, detecting their errors, or reproving their corruption?

Thus they settle down into the conclusion that "their strength is to sit still." In this conclusion they fortify themselves by their conceptions of passing events and historical facts. When, say they, did an agitator against public abuses or vices ever make himself popular by it, or otherwise than to those whom he would reform? When did such an one fail to bring down obloquy and persecution upon himself, becoming "no reputation" in the community in which he lived? What was the influence of Moses with Pharaoh, of John the Baptist with Herod, of the Apostles with Caesar?—Assuredly, would it not have been their wisdom to have remained quiet—their strength to have set still? If this is not said of ancient and venerable reformers, it is said of their living successors.

Such were the corrupt priests, and false prophets in the time of Isaiah, among a rebellious people that took counsel, but not of the Lord, and covered with a covering, but not of His Spirit, that they might add sin to sin—going down into Egypt, not asking at the mouth of the Lord: strengthening themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and trusting in the shadow of Egypt, until the strength of Pharaoh become their shame, and their trust in the shadow of Egypt their confusion—children who would not hear the law of the Lord: saying to the sees, see not, and to the prophets prophecy decays; get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.—Seers and prophets to their own liking, the people found, in abundance, who understood that their strength was to sit still, that their interest was on the side of the evil doers. Like people, like priest, and so they all floated down the popular current of delusion together.—Wherefore, thus saith the Lord, his prophet, Isaiah: "Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach, ready to fall, swelling out, in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly, in an instant." Again, saith the Lord, "For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose, therefore have I cried concerning this, their strength is to sit still." Rather than do as they were doing, they had better have done nothing.

Men may talk of their Constitutions as they please—and it would be well for us if our Constitution, so shamelessly mis-represented and misinterpreted, were better studied, instead of being declaimed upon, perverted, disdained, and yet all idolized—but before, beneath, above, and behind more human Constitutions, God has his constitution of civil government for States and Nations, his definitions of national authority, national duty, national rights, State rights, and rights of individuals; a Constitution which no State or Nation, either in peace or war, can with impunity transgress, transcede, or disregard—a Constitution engraved by the finger of God, (as the writers on Common Law truly tell us) on man's moral nature, laying the basis of that natural law, without or against which (as those writers also maintain) no human legislation or jurisprudence could be binding.—Constitution of civil Government clearly revealed in God's word—a constitution for the due observance and administration of which, God's word and Providence hold the people of every nation responsible, as the page of universal history attests—thus closing with a Divine sanction, the sovereignty, under God, of the people, yet announcing clearly, the objects and limits of that authority, which both their sovereignty and nationality are committed to them; and the derelictions for which they must be forfeited and forever lost.

In God's Constitution of Government, the object and direction of the Military branch of the Government is as clearly pointed out, and as authoritatively determined, as is the legislative and the judicial. JUSTICE is the one sole, grand, comprehensive mission of each. If laws are enacted they must be for justice, and on this element (as the writers on Common Law likewise assert) their validity is conditioned; hence "Acts of Parliament contrary to reason are void." Or, as our Federal judges have affirmed, "Statutes against fundamental morality are void." So likewise of the judicial department and its decisions. "If it be found that a former decision is manifestly absurd and unjust, it is declared, not that such sentence was 'bad law,' but that it was 'not law.' The sword of the magistrate is not to be borne in vain, but for the execution of justice. How much more the military sword, by which, without judge, jury or trial thousands of men, the innocent along with the guilty, are liable to be, and to a great extent must be, mowed down, promiscuously? The military power of the Government must never be resorted to, but for the purposes of justice. God never promises success to armies on any other condition than that they are fighting, necessarily, for the administration of justice, for the defence of human rights. On the other hand, he threatens with severe judgments and with final overthrow, the nations and the Government that resort to war for other purposes.

Our Nation is now carrying on a devastating war. The question of our success is the question whether, in this war, we are on the side of God, enjoying His Divine approbation and favor. He is the God of the oppressed. He has suffered this war to break out against us and scourge us, for our guilty tolerance of oppression, and our complicity with the oppressors—the very same oppressors whom he has now made His instruments for chastising us! He appears to have

perished in the flood, would have found their safety in sitting still. If Pharaoh and his hosts could have contented themselves, sitting still, they might have escaped the overthrow in the Red Sea. James and Jambres, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Absalom, Athiphol, Haman, and Judas, and all the wicked conspirators that have ever lived, down to the times of Jeff Davis, would have found their strength in sitting still, doing nothing, rather than in working out, so industriously, their own destruction.

The same principle holds true in the case of "good sort of people," who, in their way, would like to do some good to the world, and win the credit of it, but who cannot afford the self-denying and self-sacrificing way of doing good to that the Bible has plainly pointed out to them. Their half-way measures have all been, not merely worthless, but mischievous, standing in the way of the only efficient measures. Their strength would have been to sit still, and attempt nothing. All their compromises with slavery and slave-holders, for sixty years past, have been failures, and worse than failures. Every one of them has been a link in the chain of cause and effect, that has bound us in the horrid condition in which we now find ourselves. He said, that he would regret most, was the inferences that would be drawn by the upper classes, to the canaille, we are the repeatable clergy; you are the fanatics—or, we know not who or whence ye are!—their language might have been coarser, but their meaning could not have been more unmistakable, more definite, or more painful. To itself, it was no new revelation. We had witnessed similar things, in this city, thirty years since.

What such gentlemen think of the bearing of such deportment, upon their ministerial influence, and usefulness, we cannot say. Their unapproachable distance from the masses of the people, does not permit them either to know, or imagine. We wish they could have heard what we heard, after the meeting was over, from the lips of a venerable pastor, from among the number of the excluded, who had silently listened to them. He was, apparently, the senior of most of them, and was, perhaps, as extensively and as favorably known to the christians of this other country as the average of them. He said, that what he most regretted, was the inferences that would be drawn by the community in respect to the clergy. It would be said, as it frequently is said, that the clergy are continually mining in secret, concealing from the people the real objects of their movements. He knew little of society among the mass of the people, in this country, or of human nature in general, or of church history, who does not appreciate the weight of such suggestions. The sentiment alluded to, so far from being peculiar to unbelievers or scoffers, is still more deeply imbedded in the breasts of the most earnest thinkers in the church. One of the profoundest and most deservedly honored of living christian writers, in the communion of the church of England, the Author of "Spiritual Despotism," has elaborated the "clergy apart from the laity," or "brotherhood of the church," that all spiritual despots have had their origin. Just here it is, insists, not in Diocesan Episcopacy, nor even in the Papacy itself, that "the Man of Sin" was born, cradled, and nurtured; and, in fact, lives, and is domiciled, to the present day. With Isaac Taylor's "Spiritual Despotism" in their family libraries, the christian brotherhood of the nineteenth century cannot be blamed for looking askance at secret clerical conclaves.

But we have not yet reached the core of our criticism upon the Cooper Institute proceedings. We come to a question of "proprieties" more important than even that of appearing in a meeting (whether by due authority or otherwise) by the public press, without a written note of invitation. It was distinctly stated by Dr. Burchard, and truthfully stated, without a question, that the object of the previous meeting was to consider what is the duty, "on the part of the clergy of this city and the neighboring city." Here we have the undoubted fact, that the deliberations of the previous meeting and of the adjourned meeting, resulting in any definite action, were intended to have been sent forth to the government of the Nation, to the President and to Congress, to the Nation, to the world, and to posterity, as the deliberate, matured opinions, expressions, and acts of "the clergy of this city and the neighboring city." All who along with this, the large numbers of the "Clergy of New York and of the neighboring city" were distinctly told that they had no business at the meeting—that nobody had been authorized to invite them. "No notice had emanated from the Committee." The President and the Secretary disclaimed having had any hand in it. And an unknown somebody, clergyman or layman, who had attended the former meeting and who, it would seem, had been granted that he might be acceptable to the government, or to the nation, to the world, and to posterity, was invited to come. By whom, or why what means such notice was given to the papers, we cannot, with certainty, say; but we think that unauthorized announcements, ought not to appear. We should not have obscured ourselves, upon the meeting, had we suspected that we were not wanted. But being there, we felt ourselves at liberty to hear what was said, and said for the very purpose of its being heard, by all who were present. These facts, being public, are open to public criticism and inspection.

In another column will be found an account, from our city papers, of a "Select Clerical Movement" in this city.—The second meeting at Cooper Institute, however, was not quite as select, it would seem, as the gentlemen at the first meeting could have desired, and was likely to prove of a more radical type than would be convenient for them. We were, ourselves, among the number of these. Like others who saw the public notice in the papers, we came in good faith, supposing we were invited to come. By whom, or why what means such notice was given to the papers, we cannot, with certainty, say; but we think that unauthorized announcements, ought not to appear. We should not have obscured ourselves, upon the meeting, had we suspected that we were not wanted. But being there, we felt ourselves at liberty to hear what was said, and said for the very purpose of its being heard, by all who were present. These facts, being public, are open to public criticism and inspection.

We do not try the right of any persons who may choose, to hold consultations, apart from the public, by themselves, without divulging their deliberations to the community.

When, say they, did an agitator against public abuses or vices ever make himself popular by it, or otherwise than to those whom he would reform? When did such an one fail to bring down obloquy and persecution upon himself, becoming "no reputation" in the community in which he lived? What was the influence of Moses with Pharaoh, of John the Baptist with Herod, of the Apostles with Caesar?—Assuredly, would it not have been their wisdom to have remained quiet—their strength to have set still, attempting nothing upon which the real benefactors of their race have won renown.

They cannot afford to make earnest use, or trial of their influence in opposition to any great social wrongs, lest by displeasing wrong doers they should lose their influence over them, and over those who follow in their train. Their conception of exerting an influence in society is that of swimming on the surface of its current, keeping every one, or at least the great, and the middle, in good humor with them, so that, at all times, they may be acceptable to them in all that they may say or do.

For, how could they expect to have influence upon society, unless they are popular in society? Or how could they have influence with men in power, unless they were on the side of the men in power? And how could they be on their side, while opposing their measures, detecting their errors, or reproving their corruption?

Thus they settle down into the conclusion that "their strength is to sit still." In this conclusion they fortify themselves by their conceptions of passing events and historical facts. When, say they, did an agitator against public abuses or vices ever make himself popular by it, or otherwise than to those whom he would reform? When did such an one fail to bring down obloquy and persecution upon himself, becoming "no reputation" in the community in which he lived? What was the influence of Moses with Pharaoh, of John the Baptist with Herod, of the Apostles with Caesar?—Assuredly, would it not have been their wisdom to have remained quiet—their strength to have set still, attempting nothing upon which the real benefactors of their race have won renown.

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ster; and whence and where the said writ shall be suspended or suspended, it shall be unlawful for any of the judges of the several courts of the United States, or of an State, to allow said writ, as to such offenses, or to make or issue any of the orders hereinbefore provided, anything in this act or in any other act to the contrary notwithstanding.

The consideration of the subject was deferred.

Arrests of Citizens of Delaware.—Mr. SALT'S bill was again considered, and was with the amendment thereto, laid on the table.

In the House. **The Rebellion.**—The Resolution of Mr. Wright, and of Mr. Vandall, were again brought forward and postponed.

Indians in Minnesota.—Mr. WINDOM, to secure consent, in pursuance of previous motion, introduced a bill for the removal of the Winnebago Indians, and for the sale of their reservation in Minnesota, for their benefit; which was read twice, and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mr. ALLEN, by unanimous consent, introduced a bill for the removal of certain bands of the Sioux Indians, and for the disposition of their reservation in Minnesota and Dakota; which was read a first and second time, and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

FRIDAY, DEC. 12.

IN SENATE. **Internal Revenue.** The House bill for amending the internal revenue act was taken up, and the discussion and adoption of sundry amendments occupied most of the day. The bill was read a third time and passed. Little other business of importance was transacted.

IN THE HOUSE. **Speech of Mr. Noell.**

The principal feature of the day was the speech made by Mr. Noell, in Committee of the whole, on the state of the Union, in which he defended the President from the charge of usurpation in making arrests in Missouri. Among other things he said:

Mr. Noell.—I am no fanatic on this question of slavery. I have been rear'd in its midst, and accustomed to it all the days of my life; and so long as it existed, I was a slave to it.

Mr. Noell.—I do, so long I hold that it ought to be tolerated and protected, as other property is by the local laws of the State; but as the moment it becomes an element of national destruction, the moment we have to choose between national death and the death of slavery, then slavery ought to be destroyed, and I am for a moment of the Union and I am for the destruction of slavery to their original positions in the Union.

Mr. Noell.—But sir, we all know that the cause of slavery, it not the cause of the rebellion, has been a most potent element—a cause of breeding and prosecuting this rebellion, than in the process of restoring the Union. I would give it a position, and which I could have done, and which I could never again demand, is to grant a general pardon.

General Bankrupt Law. The bill was discussed, without reaching a vote.

FRIDAY, DEC. 13.

IN SENATE. **Discharge of Bisected Soldiers.**—The bill for the discharge of bisected soldiers was taken up, and after a prolonged discussion, was passed.

General Bankrupt Law. The bill was discussed, without reaching a vote.

FRIDAY, DEC. 14.

IN THE HOUSE. **Details in Paying Soldiers.**—The bill for the payment of soldiers, introduced and referred to the Committee of the Treasury, from the Army of the United States, or of the Revenue, to an army of the United States for the purpose of capturing runaway slaves and returning them to their owners. Read it for ourselves, gentlemen of the House of Representatives, and see whether I am not correct.

Enslaved Slaves.—Mr. BINGHAM, I am instructed by the Committee on the Judiciary, to which was referred House bill No. 255, to provide and grant relief to the citizens of legal slaves, who have been enslaved and absconded by the officers and soldiers of the Army of the United States, to report the same back, with the recommendation that it do not pass. I move that the bill be rejected.

Mr. WIGHTON, opposed the motion, and a division ensued, in which Mr. WIGHTON said:

It is the bill of the rebels under God. It is impossible to interfere with the rule and article of war passed at the last session of Congress. That article of war is itself often misunderstood. It does not prohibit a man from rightfully seeking for his property when it is in possession of the Army of the United States, or of the Revenue, to an army of the United States for the purpose of capturing runaway slaves and returning them to their owners. Read it for yourselves, gentlemen of the House of Representatives, and see whether I am not correct.

Mr. BINGHAM. My colleagues will permit me to make a short statement. I will show that I have been informed that there is a general order published this morning from headquarters which allows the service of civil process in the Army in every State for the recovery of slaves. It allows civil process to be executed within the Army in Kentucky.

Mr. WIGHTON.—I am sorry to hear that such an order has been issued. Let the Lord know how long it will last. [Laughter.] Probably to the next day or the next week. [Renewed Laughter.]

Mr. BINGHAM commented on the difficulty of determining who are loyal and who are rebels, and so on.

I have been told, by authority I deem reliable, that in some portions of my own State, where our troops have been in possession, it has been the practice of secessionists to entice the slaves from loyal men—men known to be such—devout Union men—to entice their slaves by some means into the lines of the Federal Army, where they could not be claimed, for the purpose of procuring dissatisfaction, and that this may not give some instances. Such opportunities to annoy the loyal citizens of the country by those who are disloyal ought not to be afforded by the existing state of law; and I trust that the committee will take this matter in charge will take this into consideration, and avoid striking our own friends who are disloyal at the traitors.

[This illustrates the folly of attempting to discriminate between the slaves of rebels and of traitors, En.]

Mr. WIGHTON earnestly opposed the bill, and in doing so, said, this bill is flatly unconstitutional, and that, that it is not only involved in it, at some future day, if the Union is restored, the United States is restored to its supremacy in every State of the Union, come home to plague the venerable inventor of the bill. It is the duty of the Federal Government to institute proceedings touching the rendition of slaves not escaping from the rebels, but remaining in the same State in which they are claimed to be held, and to determine also the alleged rights of property in such case in slaves. I think that it is enough for me to say of a case of this sort, that this is the first time in the history of the Government when a bill has been introduced in either the Senate or the House, to confer such authority upon the officers of the Federal Government.

Mr. WIGHTON.—I am sorry to hear that such an order has been issued. Let the Lord know how long it will last. [Laughter.] Probably to the next day or the next week. [Renewed Laughter.]

Adjourned over till Monday.

THE WAR.

SATURDAY, DEC. 15.

Army of the Potowmack.—The story that our army had been obliged to recross the Rappahannock proves too true. The crossing was effected on Monday night (the 13th) in the face of a severe storm of wind and rain, and without the knowledge of the enemy. We give the despatch of Gen. Burnside announcing the movement.

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE POTOWMACK, Dec. 16—6 p. m.—*Maj. Gen. HALLIECK, Commander-in-Chief.*—The Army of the Potowmack was withdrawn to this side of the Rappahannock river, because it could not be carried, and it was a military necessity either to attack the enemy or retire.

The War.—In Committee of the Whole, Mr. STEVENS spoke on his bill to provide means for defraying the expenses of the Army of the Potowmack, and only a small force of the Army from the armed force of the United States for the purpose of capturing runaway slaves and returning them to their owners. Read it for yourselves, gentlemen of the House of Representatives, and see whether I am not correct.

Mr. BINGHAM. My colleagues will permit me to make a short statement. I will show that I have been informed that there is a general order published this morning from headquarters which allows the service of civil process in the Army in every State for the recovery of slaves. It allows civil process to be executed within the Army in Kentucky.

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[This illustrates the folly of attempting to discriminate between the slaves of rebels and of traitors, En.]

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Adjourned over till Monday.

THE WAR.

SUNDAY, DEC. 16.

Army of the Potowmack.—The story that our army had been obliged to recross the Rappahannock proves too true. The crossing was effected on Monday night (the 13th) in the face of a severe storm of wind and rain, and without the knowledge of the enemy. We give the despatch of Gen. Burnside announcing the movement.

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE POTOWMACK, Dec. 16—6 p. m.—*Maj. Gen. HALLIECK, Commander-in-Chief.*—The Army of the Potowmack was withdrawn to this side of the Rappahannock river, because it could not be carried, and it was a military necessity either to attack the enemy or retire.

The South West.—On Saturday morning a body of rebel cavalry attacked a railroad near Jackson, Tenn., firing into a train, and tearing up the track for some distance. They were committing further depredations to last accounts.

Numerous flying rumors reach us, through rebel channels, but they are little to be relied on. They are on the whole, favorable to our side.

TUESDAY, DEC. 17.

Gen. Burnside's Explanation—Official.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOWMACK, FALMOUTH, Dec. 19, 1862.—*Maj. Gen. H. H. HALLIECK, General-in-Chief, United States Army, Washington.*

GENERAL: I have the honor to offer the following reasons for moving the Army of the Potowmack, as recommended by the President, the Secretary of War, and the Adjutant General, to this side of the Rappahannock river, in view of the following:

The army was withdrawn at night without the knowledge of the enemy, and without loss, either of property or men.

AMBROSE E. BURNSIDE, Maj. Gen. Commanding.

We now stand in the same position as before the forward movement, with the exception of the loss of some thousands, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, of our bravest men, a clearer understanding of the alleged rights of property in slaves. I think that it is enough for me to say of a case of this sort, that this is the first time in the history of the Government when a bill has been introduced in either the Senate or the House, to confer such authority upon the officers of the Federal Government.

Mr. WIGHTON.—I am sorry to hear that such an order has been issued. Let the Lord know how long it will last. [Laughter.] Probably to the next day or the next week. [Renewed Laughter.]

Adjourned over till Monday.

THE WAR.

SUNDAY, DEC. 18.

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THE WAR.

SUNDAY, DEC. 19.

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Adjourned over till Monday.

THE WAR.

SUNDAY, DEC. 20.

Army of the Potowmack.—The story that our army had been obliged to recross the Rappahannock proves too true. The crossing was effected on Monday night (the 13th) in the face of a severe storm of wind and rain, and without the knowledge of the enemy. We give the despatch of Gen. Burnside announcing the movement.

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The army was withdrawn at night without the knowledge of the enemy, and without loss, either of property or men.

AMBROSE E. BURNSIDE, Maj. Gen. Commanding.

We now stand in the same position as before the forward movement, with the exception of the loss of some thousands, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, of our bravest men, a clearer understanding of the alleged rights of property in slaves. I think that it is enough for me to say of a case of this sort, that this is the first time in the history of the Government when a bill has been introduced in either the Senate or the House, to confer such authority upon the officers of the Federal Government.

Mr. WIGHTON.—I am sorry to hear that such an order has been issued. Let the Lord know how long it will last. [Laughter.] Probably to the next day or the next week. [Renewed Laughter.]

Adjourned over till Monday.

THE WAR.

SUNDAY, DEC. 21.

Army of the Potowmack.—The story that our army had been obliged to recross the Rappahannock proves too true. The crossing was effected on Monday night (the 13th) in the face of a severe storm of wind and rain, and without the knowledge of the enemy. We give the despatch of Gen. Burnside announcing the movement.

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE POTOWMACK, FALMOUTH, Dec. 19, 1862.—*Maj. Gen. H. H. HALLIECK, General-in-Chief, United States Army, Washington.*

GENERAL: I have the honor to offer the following reasons for moving the Army of the Potowmack, as recommended by the President, the Secretary of War, and the Adjutant General, to this side of the Rappahannock river, in view of the following:

The army was withdrawn at night without the knowledge of the enemy, and without loss, either of property or men.

AMBROSE E. BURNSIDE, Maj. Gen. Commanding.

Family Miscellany.

For the Principia.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

BY JAMES UNDERHILL.

I walk along the laughing stream,
Unflecked from winter's stern embraces,
And mark the merry sunlit gleam;
And sparkle o'er the ripples' faces.

Thought scarce from o'er the southern slopes—
The snow is gone—the sun-glace meeting—
In snowless spots, sweet violets,
Sun-born and pure, give modest greeting.

Winter is gone—sun-smeared away;
Spring, fairer day, now advances;
Forms rise—long lain in frozen graves—
Edging all that beauty faunes.

While Winter reigns, Spring smiles around;
—A wane waste 'tis. Beauty now surprises—
That in the soul's night, light is found;
From Death's dark shadows, Life arises!

When'sh dark night enshrouds the mind,
The dreary waste is all unknown;
True life is beauty there we find;
—LEAF THERE BE LIGHT? is yet unspoken.

But death and darkness flee apace,
When Christ, the Light of Life has risen,
And wrought his image in the soul.

Love sought and saved from sin's drear prison.

And now, Hope soars above Despair;

Smiles o'er a sea of tears are playing:

Highest the soul when humblest bowed;

Nearest to God, when lowliest praying.

O, Light of Light!—O Life of Life!

O Thou, of Light and Life the Giver!

Stream light, give life into my soul;

So shall I live and live forever.

OSCEOLA, MICH., Dec. 9th, 1862.

HOME FROM THE WAR.

BY ALICE CARY.

The moon has hidden her gentle face,
The clouds are sultry and grey,
But my true love is home from the war,
And my heart is bright as May.

O woodlands, talk no more with th' winds,
That blow so wild and rough,
Put on your crowns of golden leaves,
For you cannot be bright enough.

Poor, little, pifful lams, I would
Could gather you out of the dew,
For the sunshine is all a phantom,
And nothing but love is true.

I know not who has lost or won,
Nor who has lived or died,
Only know that my lover has come,
And I nothing know beside.

Poor little pifful lams, I would
Were lying low at my feet
For your grassy beds are a wearies,
And nothing but love is sweet.

[The following comes to us from the Army, in hand-bill form. We do not publish it as a model of literature, but to show the spirit of our western soldiers, who understand themselves to be fighting for the Union as it should be—without slavery. It comes as would seem, from a "Grey beard Regiment," composed of volunteer exempts.]

GRAY BEARDS ARE MARCHING ON.

The Gray Beard Regiment is coming, from Iowa's dis-

tant shore.

To help to fill the ranks of six hundred thousand more,
And help our boys to fight as they never fought before.

Gray Beards are marching on.

We leave our homes and loved ones—cession for to

right;

This is a Freeman's duty—love freedom and the right—
Our land and Constitution to save from slavery's blight;

Gray Beards are marching on.

Our Iowa boys don't suffer nor turn their backs in

right;

They love to fight proud slaves and put them all to

flight;

The Gray Beard Regiment is coming to help with all

its might.

Gray Beards are marching on.

Our cause is all our country, united as one—

As left us by our fathers in ages that are gone—

This is the favored land where freedom first was born.

Gray Beards are marching on.

Our Iowa boys don't suffer nor turn their backs in

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